



SENATOR

**Phil Rockefeller**

E-Newsletter - 23rd District, Bainbridge Island

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**23rd Legislative District**

**April 9, 2009**

Dear Neighbors,

Last week, the much anticipated Senate and House operating and capital budget proposals were released and the transportation budget proposal was released the week before that. I believe it is important to understand the difference between these biennial budgets.

The operating budget pays for the day-to-day operations of state government such as education, healthcare and corrections. As I have mentioned many times this session, the proposed cuts are difficult for legislators here in Olympia to consider and even more difficult for those they will impact. Conversely, there are some positives in the operating budget, including the beginnings of state supported upper division, baccalaureate degree granting programs starting at Olympic College.

For more detail on the proposed operating budget click [here](#).

The state capital, or construction, budget uses mostly bonds instead of cash and is a legally separate budget from the state operating budget. The capital budget is a long term investment strategy that the state uses to construct and preserve public facilities — everything from water systems to schools and community centers.

There are only three weeks left in this legislative session, and we are moving quickly toward exclusive floor action. The Senate and House budgets will have to be reconciled in that time, so I will be working hard with my colleagues, Reps. Appleton and Rolfes, to ensure that the final budget reflects the needs and concerns of our constituents in the 23<sup>rd</sup> District.

I look forward to lively, but civil debate as we make some very difficult decisions and am confident we'll be able to reach agreement with the House and with Gov. Gregoire between now and the end of session on April 26.

As always, I welcome your ideas.

Warm Regards,

Phil Rockefeller  
State Senator  
23rd Legislative District

(360) 786-7644

[rockefeller.phil@leg.wa.gov](mailto:rockefeller.phil@leg.wa.gov)

[www.senatedemocrats.wa.gov/senators/rockefeller/](http://www.senatedemocrats.wa.gov/senators/rockefeller/)

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### **Capital budget — lean and focused**

The 2009 – 2011 capital budget is a triumph of ingenuity in difficult times. At \$3.3 billion, it's 29 percent smaller than the 2007 – 2009 budget and nearly \$700 million less than what Gov. Gregoire proposed months ago before revenues fell lower. We managed to cover our most vital core needs while putting more Washingtonians to work and supporting the local economy.

This capital budget is smaller for two reasons — our loss of revenue in the recession, and because we transfer \$743 million in cash accounts to cover basic needs in health and public safety in the operating budget. Without that transfer, we would have had to cut the operating budget by the equivalent of the entire Basic Health Program — on top of all our other cuts.

The Senate capital budget proposal offers the 23rd district communities some vital construction projects which will help to balance some of the cuts made in the operating budget. It is important to recognize these projects were picked because they are ready to start, will help create local jobs, and provide important services to people in our community. The Senate capital budget includes funding for the Kitsap Girl Scout Center, The Keller House Services Center, the Central Kitsap Community Campus YMCA and the Kid's Discovery Museum, among several others.

### **Transportation budget — creating local jobs and improving facilitation of commerce**

The Senate passed a [transportation budget](#) that provides \$4.3 billion in funding for over 400 projects all over the state using revenue sources that are kept separate from the operating and capital budgets. Funded primarily with our state's gas taxes, these funds are constitutionally dedicated to building, maintaining and operating our state highway system — including the marine highways serviced by Washington State Ferries.

Transportation revenue and investment packages authorized by the Legislature in 2003 and 2005 — and endorsed by citizens via the initiative process — are peaking at the very time when public investment in infrastructure is needed to bolster the sagging economy, and our proposed transportation budget takes advantage of this unique opportunity to help jump start the economy and create jobs.

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